

Black Hills National Forest EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Mark Vedder, Range Program Manager



What is your educational background?

I completed one year of general studies at Palomar College in Escondido, California, and then transferred to the University of Idaho at Moscow in 1975. I graduated in December, 1978 with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Range Resources and a minor in Fire Sciences. Part of my U of I experience was serving as a Resident Advisor for White Pine (co-ed) and Graham Halls.

What interested you most about the USFS?

My summer seasonal work in 1976 included time with Soulen Livestock, a large cattle and sheep operator in western and central Idaho (Payette NF). Phil Soulen had four ranches, and ran on FS and BLM grazing permits. It was a fantastic summer job for me.

I followed up with another two great summers as range technician with the Challis National Forest, where I increased my growing interest in livestock grazing, horse use, and mules, including packing with Decker saddles. My first FS supervisor, Bill Millick, was a veteran of the Marine Corps during Pacific Theater operations during WWII, and he possessed a super "let's get going" work ethic.

Those experiences and college helped me to my first permanent job on the Caribou NF (southeastern Idaho),

as an entry level Range Conservationist on the Pocatello Ranger District.

What type of work are you doing for the USFS?

Currently serve as Forest Range Program Manager for Black Hills NF and am also responsible for botany and invasive programs. I split duties and also work for the Mystic Ranger District as a Staff Officer covering range management of 30 cattle allotments, invasive species inventory and treatment, wildlife habitat management, botany program, and fleet management.

What is your favorite thing about working for the USFS?

My favorite things about working for the USFS are the places I've been, the things I've seen, and the people I've met and worked with along the way, because overall it's been a great experience and career for me and my family.

The Caribou NF provided ample opportunities for career development and cross training in other resource areas, despite being one of the poorest (financially speaking) forests in Region 4 at that time. We did a lot of varied work, and included extensive packing to blast in new ponds with explosives. The Black Hills NF also allowed me to develop in fire suppression, fuels management, brush disposal, and aviation. The Forest also facilitated a return to range management.

How long have you been with the USFS?

I am working on my 38th year with the Forest Service.

What do you most admire about the Black Hills?

I admire the places I've been, the things I've seen, and the people I've met and worked with along the way on the Black Hills NF. The opportunity to work with our grazing permittees and cooperating agencies is much appreciated by me. Additionally, I have been allowed to be engaged in many resources and career opportunities here.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? What would be your ultimate career objective or goal inside the USFS?

My ultimate career objective is to be the best supervisor and example for my employees. Secondly, I'd like to continue my family activities and hobbies once my FS career is concluded, and be involved in my community.

What do you like to do outside of the office...hobbies or a passion you have?

Spending time together with my wife Karen, kids, and extended family;; reading, being outdoors, hiking, photography, working around the home and yard, tweaking vehicles, fishing, hunting, and camping are current interests...



*What my family and friends think I do... _
(Sterling Justice, 1st Pocatello District Ranger, Caribou NF)*